

STORY OF LORD KRISHNA

Part - 1

1. Lord Krishna is a major deity in Hinduism. He is worshipped as the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu. He is the God of Protection, Compassion, affection and love and is one of the most popular and widely revered among Hinduism divinities. Till today, Krishna's childhood escapades are fondly remembered.

2. Divine Prophecy

Ugrasena was the King of Mathura. King Ugrasena and Queen Padmavati had two children a son named Kansa and a daughter named Devaki. Devaki was a good-natured person, but Kansa had an evil mind. When he grew up, he dethroned his father and put him in jail.

Meanwhile, his sister Devaki married king Vasudeva. Vasudeva who son of Yadava King Surasena in the Surasena Kingdom. Sage Kashyapa is said to have taken birth as Vasudeva, the father of Krishna, due to a curse by Varuna and Brahma. Once the sage performed a Yajna. Kashyapa sought the help of the God Varuna for the offerings of milk and ghee. Varuna sent a divine cow that would provide him offerings. After completing the sacrifice, Kashyapa delayed in giving the cow back to the deity. Varuna cursed the sage and his wife, Aditi to be born on earth as Vasudeva and Devaki, the parents of Vishnu in his avatar of Krishna.

After marriage, as Kansa was escorting his sister to her in-laws' place, a heavenly voice prophesied from the skies that "The eighth son of your sister will grow up to kill you." Kansa wanted to put his sister to death, to save his life. Vasudeva begged Kansa to spare his wife. He promised that he would hand over every child of theirs. Kansa was pacified and put the couple behind bars.

Part - 2

3. Birth of Krishna

Kansa imprisoned Devaki and Vasudeva and ordered his soldiers to guard the cell. Every time Devaki gave birth to a child, Kansa would visit the couple and take away their baby. Dashing to the wall, he would kill the baby. When Devaki was pregnant for the seventh time, the foetus was miraculously transferred to Rohini's womb in Vrindavan. Balarama was born. Kansa was told that it had been a still birth. Devaki and Vasudeva's eighth child Krishna was born at the stroke of midnight of Shravana month, Rohini Nakshatra from the womb of Mother Devaki in the prison of Mathura in the Vrishnidan of Yadavas. This special day is now celebrated as Janmashtami.

4. Krishna's Foster Home

As soon as Krishna was born, the guards manning Devaki and Vasudeva's cell went into deep slumber and the locks fell open. Placing baby Krishna in a wicker basket, Vasudeva left for Gokul. When he reached the Yamuna river, he saw that it was flooded due to the pouring rain. But he had to save Krishna's life. So, without fearing for his own life, Vasudeva started walking across the river. With his every step, the waters receded, and Lord Vishnu's serpent **Adishesha** protected baby Krishna from the rain.

Vasudeva reached Nanda's house. Nanda was the cousin of Vasudeva, who became foster father of Krishna. Vasudeva saw that Nanda's wife Yashoda had given birth to a baby girl. All were in deep slumber. Slowly, he picked the baby up and placed Krishna in her place. Then, he returned to the prison with the baby. Devaki and Vasudeva had hoped that Kansa would spare the baby girl because the prophecy had mentioned Devaki's eighth son would kill Kansa. But Kansa didn't care. He snatched the baby from their hands and flung her against the wall. Miraculously, the baby transformed into Goddess Durga and informed Kansa that Devaki's eighth son was alive and would soon come to kill him. **Sage Ganga Muni** named the child as Krishna in naming ceremony.

Part - 3

5. Krishna and Putana

Kansa was desperate to kill Krishna. He planned to send fearful demoness **Putana**. He told her to take the form of a beautiful young woman and kill all the babies that had been born in the previous ten days in Gokul. Putana readily accepted the proposal. Putana disguised herself as a young beautiful woman and came to Gokul (Vraj), Krishna's hometown. Her sublime beauty made the people of Gopa to think her as manifestation of goddess Lakshmi. Putana entered Krishna's village. When she heard everybody talking about Yashoda's newborn baby, the demoness immediately thought that this was the child she had to eliminate. Stunned by her beauty, Krishna's foster-mother Yashoda allowed Putana to take the infant Krishna in her lap and breast feed him. Putana had smeared her breast with mandana, an intoxicant to kill Krishna. However, Krishna squeezed her breasts and took her life away, as well as her milk. In pain, Putana screamed, pleading for release, but in vain. She ran out of the village with Krishna still clinging to her and finally fell dead. She then assumed her real demonic form. Putana was relieved of all her sins by breast feeding Krishna and she attained the mokshya.

6. Krishna and Sakatasura

Kansa sent a demon named **Sakatasura** to kill Krishna. In his previous life Sakatasura was **Utkala**, son of demon **Hiranyaksha**. While having fun in the forest, he trampled and destroyed the green trees and creepers of Rishi **Lomasa's** ashram. Rishi became angry and cursed him to become bodies. Sakatasura took the form of a large cart and went to village fair. Yashoda and Krishna were also in the fair.

After everyone had their afternoon meal, Yashoda left Krishna to sleep underneath a cart which was Sakatasura. After a while, Krishna woke up to the sound of music. He saw that all the villagers were dancing and so he started playing to the beats. Sakatasura planned to kill Krishna. Krishna kicked the cart wheel and cart crashed to the ground. Sakatasura was killed and attained Mokshya. People darted towards the cart expecting the worst would have happened to Krishna. Astonishingly, they found that Krishna was still happily playing to the tunes.

Part - 4

7. Love for Butter

Krishna loved eating butter. As he grew up, Krishna started stealing butter from his own house and neighbours. Yashoda and other Gopis hung up the pot filled with butter high so that Krishna wouldn't be able to reach it. Krishna and his friends weren't the ones to give up easily. They worked out a solution to this. Krishna made his friends to form a human pyramid. He reached the top and broke the pot. The friends relished it. Gopis were angry and disappointed at the failure of their plan.

8. Brahmanda (Universe) in Krishna's Mouth

Once Krishna and Balarama were playing. Krishna stuffed a handful of mud in his mouth. Yashoda saw this. Yashoda ran to him and asked him to open his mouth. Initially, he refused to. But, when Yashoda gave him a stern look, Krishna obliged. When Krishna opened his mouth wide, Yashoda saw all moving and non-moving entities, outer space, mountains, islands, oceans, the earth, planetary systems, the moon and the stars within his mouth. She experienced the senses, the mind and sense perception. She saw all aspects of the cosmic manifestation, along with herself and Vrindavana dhama. She realised that Krishna was the Lord in disguise. She immediately forgot everything. Yasoda took care of Krishna with increased affection.

9. Nalakuvara and Manigriva

Nalakuvara and Manigriva were demigods. Because of curse, they became trees in Krishna's courtyard. Being fed up with Krishna's mischief, Yashoda tied him to a mortar. To free himself, Krishna crawled in between the two trees in the courtyard. The mortar got stuck in the gap. Krishna pulled the rope with all his strength. The trees came crashing down and two demigods Nalakuvara and Manigriva emerged. Krishna had freed them from curse.

Part - 5

10. Krishna and Trinavarta

Trinavarta, the Demon whirlwind, once attacked Krishna. He planned to kill Krishna by throwing from the height. He lifted him high in the air. The demon was then strangled by Krishna and fell down dead.

11. **Shifting to Vrindavan**

Village elders and Nanda decided to leave Gokul because Krishna had been attacked twice, once by Putana and then by asura **Trinavarta**. They decided to go to Vrindavan as they felt unsafe. All Gokul villagers were getting cautious with repeated attacks and bad omens they had been experiencing for the last few years. Hence, the villagers left Brij and moved to Vrindavan, a very dense forest next to Govardhan mountain, which was a safer place.

12. **Krishna and Kaliya**

Kaliya, the multi-headed Naga was a ferocious naga that lived on the Ramanaka Dwipa of the Yamuna River. Kalia left the island in fear of Garuda, since eagles feed on snakes. Garuda was Kaliya's enemy. Kaliya started living in Yamuna river near Vrindavan. The venom that seeped out of its multiple mouths poisoned the water around him and animals in the area died. Once Krishna and his friends were playing near the river. While playing, their ball fell into the river, and Krishna jumped into the river to fetch it. In the river, he was attacked by Kalia. Kalia tried to crush Krishna by coiling around him but Krishna escaped effortlessly. Krishna dragged the snake onto the surface of the river, jumped on its heads and started performing his cosmic dance. He had assumed the weight of the entire universe in his tiny feet and almost crushed the naga to death. But Krishna stopped after hearing the prayers of Kaliya's wives. The humiliated and defeated snake asked for forgiveness from Krishna. Krishna commanded him to return back to the island of Ramanaka and assured him that his Vahana, Garuda, would never attack him.

Part - 6

13. **Krishna and Aghasura**

Once, Krishna and his friends set out on a picnic to the nearby forest. While they were enjoying, Aghasura, who was the brother of Putana, appeared on the spot. He had been sent by Kansa to kill Krishna. The demon assumed the form of a python and made himself as long as a cave and as big as a mountain. Then, he lay in wait. The cowherd boys, enticed by the beauty of the cave, entered it. Krishna knew that it was Aghasura and tried to warn his friends, but they were in no mood to listen. The demon had plans of closing his mouth once Krishna had entered his mouth. To save his friends, Krishna entered the cave and expanded himself. This suffocated the demon and demon died. Krishna brought all his friends and cows back to consciousness with his spiritual power and led them out of the demon's mouth. Since, the all-pure Lord himself entered Aghasura's body, the demon became fully cleansed of all sins. Aghasura achieved mokshya.

14. **Krishna and Forest Fire**

One day, Krishna and his friends went to the Munja aranya (forest) to play. They were so engaged in playing that they didn't realise that the forest had caught fire. When they were surrounded by the fire from all sides, they asked Krishna for help. Krishna asked them to close their eyes and he swallowed the entire forest fire within few minutes, leaving everyone astonished.

15. Krishna and Govardhan

It was a ritual among the inhabitants of Vrindavan to worship Indra, the God of rain. Once, when preparations were in full swing, Krishna suggested that the villagers should rather worship the Govardhan hill. They assented and started worshipping the hill. This made Indra very angry and he let his rain clouds to pour over the village. It poured cats and dogs for days and everybody sought Krishna's help. Unable to see his devotees in plight, the Lord lifted the Govardhan with his little finger. He asked the villagers to take shelter under the hill and stood in that position for seven nights. Indra realised his mistake and apologised to Krishna.

Part - 7

16. Krishna and Arishthasura

After unsuccessful attempts, Kansa decided to send a powerful demon to kill Krishna. Kansa called the demon Arishthasura and ordered him to kill Krishna. Arishthasura transformed himself into a bull and went in search of Krishna towards Vrindavan. Upon reaching Vrindavan, he saw many kids playing. In order to identify which one of them was Krishna, Arishthasura started creating havoc by uprooting trees, destroying houses and scaring away villagers. He knew that Krishna would present himself and challenge him. Everybody started running helter-skelter to save their lives. Krishna was away with his cattle and fellow cow herds. He heard screams coming from the village and saw a wild bull running among. Despite his friends warning, Krishna ran towards the bull to contain it. When Krishna faced the bull, he realised that it was demon Arishthasura. Krishna managed to tackle the bull and broke its horns. Finally, the demon bowed to the Lord. Arishthasura in earlier life was **Varatantu** and was a disciple of Lord Brihaspati. Brihaspati had cursed him to become a bull as he had disrespected his teacher, Lord Brihaspati.

17. Krishna and Keshi & other Asuras

After Krishna had defeated the demon Arishthasura, the sage Narada informed Kansa that Krishna was alive and would kill him. Fuming with rage, Kansa summoned the demon Keshi and commanded him to kill Krishna. Keshi assumed the form of a fearful horse and started terrorising the inhabitants of Vrindavan. Krishna understood that the demon was challenging him to a fight. So, he confronted the horse. On seeing the young boy, the horse charged at him. Krishna, however, caught one of the horse's legs and threw it away. When Keshi regained consciousness, he charged at Krishna again with his mouth open. The Lord pushed his left arm into the horse's mouth, breaking its teeth. Krishna inflated his arm inside and killed the demon Keshi.

18. Kansa also sent Vatsasura, Bakasura, Dhenukasura, Pralambasura, Vyomasura, Bhaumasura, Banasura, Paundraka and Kuvalayapuda to kill Krishna. None of them was able to kill Krishna. Krishna killed each one of them. The asuras after being killed by Krishna got mokshya.

Part - 8

19. Krishna and Lord Brahma

Once, Lord Brahma decided to test Krishna's powers. So, he hid all the children and cows of Vrindavan in Brahma Loka. Krishna was unhappy with Brahma's action and decided to teach him a lesson. So, he assumed the form of all his friends and calves and went to their homes. Nobody could even notice the difference. When Brahma came to check the situation in Vrindavan, he was shocked to see all the children and cows. Lord Brahma immediately realised his mistake and asked Krishna for forgiveness. Lord Brahma returned everybody.

20. Krishna Kills Kansa

Kansa had been trying to kill Krishna but in vain. So, he hatched another plan. With his servant Akura, he sent a message inviting Krishna and Balarama to the wrestling match at Mathura. Both of them agreed to attend the event. Once there, Kansa pitted the brothers against two of his strongest wrestlers. Krishna and Balarama accepted the challenge and easily defeated their opponents. Kansa lost his temper and ordered his soldiers to kill the boys. Hearing this, Krishna jumped into the stands, knocked Kansa's crown off his head and dragged him by the hair to the wrestling ring. Desperate to prove his might, the asura challenged Krishna to a wrestling bout. With one blow of Krishna's hand, Kansa fell dead. The Lord set his birth parents, Devaki and Vasudeva free and placed Ugrasena back on the throne. Shri Krishna and Lord Balarama went to live with Saandipani Muni at Avantipura for higher education. The spiritual master Saandipani Muni taught both Shri Krishna and Balarama detailed knowledge of Vedas, Upanishads, Upvedas, along with other sixty four traditional arts.

Part 9

Kingdom of Hastinapur

21. The kingdom of Hastinapur had two princes. The elder one named Dhritarashtra was blind and younger named Pandu. Dhritarashtra was bypassed because the laws barred a disabled person from becoming the king. Pandu was crowned. Dhritarashtra married Gandhari and Pandu to Kunti and Madri. After sometime, Pandu asked his elder brother to look after the state affairs and retired to the forests with his two wives to lead life of a sage.

22. Pandu had five sons. The eldest was Yudhishtir, second Bheema, third Arjun and fourth and fifth were twins Nakul and Sahadev. Dhritarashtra and Gandhari had 100 sons and one daughter. Collectively, sons of Dhritarashtra were called the Kauravas and sons of Pandu called Pandavas. All of the 105 princes got education and knowledge of weapons from Kripacharya and Dronacharya.

23. Duryodhan desired to be the crown prince. Since Dhritarashtra was occupying the throne on behalf of Pandu and Yudhishtir was eldest of all princes, Yudhishtir was declared as crown prince. Yudhishtir's popularity was rising. It was extremely distasteful to Duryodhan, who saw himself as the rightful heir since his father was the de facto king. He plotted to get rid of the Pandavas.

Part 10

Lakshya Gruha

24. Pandavas and Kunti went to Varanavrata to witness fair. The palace in which the Pandavas were to stay was made entirely of inflammable materials. The plan was to burn down the palace - together with the Pandavas and Kunti. Pandavas, however, were alerted by their uncle, Vidur. They dug an escape tunnel underneath the palace. One night, the Pandavas themselves set the palace on fire and escaped through the tunnel. One forest woman and her five sons who were involved in construction of palace died in the fire. These dead bodies made others think that Kunti and her sons were dead. Duryodhan thought that his plan had succeeded.

Swayamvar

25. Pandavas and Kunti went into hiding, moving from one place to another and lived as a poor brahmin family. They heard about a swayamvar organised for Draupadi, the princess of Panchal. Pandavas went to Panchal to see the festivities. The conditions of the swayamvar were difficult: a long pole on the ground had a circular plate rotating at its top. On this moving disc, there was attached a fish. At the bottom of the pole, there was a pot of water. The contender had to look down into this water-mirror, use the bow and five arrows that were provided, and pierce the fish's eye rotating on the top. One by one, the kings and princes tried to shoot the fish, but failed. After every one of the royals had failed, Arjuna stepped up to the pole, picked up the bow and pierced the fish's eye in a single attempt. Arjuna won Draupadi's hand.

26. The Pandava brothers took Draupadi to the hut and shouted for Kunti, "Ma, Ma, today we have got something great." Kunti said, "share it among yourselves", When she came out saw that it wasn't alms but the most beautiful woman. She was shocked as the meaning of her words sank everybody present. To keep Kunti's words, it was decided that Draupadi would be the common wife of all five Pandavas.

Part 11

Indraprastha

27. After the wedding ceremonies at Panchal were over, the Hastinapur palace invited the Pandavas and their bride back. Dhritarashtra partitioned the kingdom, giving them a huge tract of barren land called Indraprastha to settle in and rule over. Yudhishtir was crowned. The Pandavas transformed this land into a paradise. The new kingdom, Indraprastha prospered.

Dice game

28. Duryodhan invited Yudhishtir to a dice game and got his uncle, Shakuni, to play on his behalf. Shakuni was an accomplished player. Yudhishtir staked and lost his entire wealth, his kingdom, his brothers, himself and Draupadi. Draupadi was dragged into the dice hall and insulted. There was an attempt to disrobe her. However, she was saved by Lord Krishna. Dhritarashtra intervened and gave the kingdom and their freedom back and sent them to Indraprastha. Duryodhan was angry and invited Yudhishtir to another dice game. This time, the condition was that the loser would go on a 12-year exile followed by a year of life incognito. If they were discovered during this incognito period, the loser would have to repeat the 12+1 cycle. The dice game was played. Yudhishtir lost again.

29. Pandavas left their ageing mother Kunti behind at Hastinapur, in Vidur's place. They lived in forests and visited holy places. Yudhishtir asked Arjuna to go to the

heavens in quest of celestial weapons because, by now, it was apparent that their kingdom would not be returned to them peacefully after the exile and they would have to fight for it. Arjuna prayed God and learnt the techniques of several divine weapons. He also learnt singing and dancing from the gandharvas.

On completion of exile, an emissary was sent to Hastinapur to demand Indraprastha. But, Duryodhan said that no land will be given without war. Lord Krishna, who was the son of Kunti's brother played a central role in supporting the Pandavas during their exile. Krishna himself went on a peace mission, but failed. Duryodhan refused to give away even a dot of land. Krishna pleaded for five villages to avoid war. But, Duryodhan declined and insisted for war. The war became inevitable.

Part 12

30. Kurukshetra war

Just before the war bugle was sounded, Arjuna saw arrayed before him his relatives: his great-grand-father, Bheeshm who had practically brought him up, his teachers, Kripacharya and Dronacharya and the Kaurava brothers. His resolution for war wavered. Krishna was Arjuna's charioteer. Arjuna said, "I can't kill my relatives. I do not want kingdom at the cost of their lives" Krishna explained the impermanence of life to Arjuna and the importance of doing one's duty and of sticking to the right path. The teachings of Krishna has been compiled as Bhagavat Gita. It is treated as life lessons for whole mankind. Then, Arjuna picked up his bow and was ready for fight.

31. The war lasted for 18 days. Pandavas won the war, but lost almost everyone they held dear. Duryodhan and all of the Kauravas died. The entire country lost almost three generations of its men. It was a war not seen on such a scale before, called the Maha-bharat.

32. After the war, Yudhishtir became king of Hastinapur and Indraprastha. The Pandavas ruled for 36 years and handed over to Abhimanyu's son, Parikshit. The Pandavas and Draupadi proceeded to the Himalayas to lead a simple life. Years later, Parikshit's son succeeded his father as king. He held a big yajna, at which this entire story was recited for the first time by a disciple of Vyasa called Vaishampayan.

Part 13

33. Ten Avatars of Lord Bishnu

Ten avatars of Lord Bishnu are Mastya, Kaschap (Kurma), Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parshuram, Ram, Krishna or Balaram, Buddha and Kalki.